

CHAPTER 9

How to Get Stakeholder Buy In for Implementing Emerging Technologies in Your Library



Figure 9.1 Woman wearing virtual reality glasses

Stakeholders (directors, managers, administrators, and any decision makers) are the key to implementing emerging technologies in your library. Getting them on board to support your emerging technology initiatives is critical to your success. I have included tips below to get them on board. I have also included a checklist to follow before meeting with your stakeholders to discuss implementing emerging technologies in your library (Fig. 9.1).

1. *Who are your stakeholders and how can you engage them early on?*

Research who your stakeholders are. Stakeholders come in all shapes, sizes, and areas of expertise. Your role is to find out who they are, what their needs are, what their areas of expertise are, and how they can support your emerging technology projects. The most critical piece to getting your stakeholders on board to support your technology initiatives is addressing the question: “What’s in it for them?” This will get their attention every time.

You will need to find creative ways to engage your stakeholders early on. This means once you have determined their area of interest and expertise, you capitalize on them. This might mean inviting them to different workshops and seminars that you are hosting or even inviting them to present their area of expertise in your library.

Public library example

For example, you might be employed in a public library and you learn that a board member is the director of the workforce investment board. You might invite them to participate on a panel discussion that you are having on autonomous vehicles. They can discuss how truck drivers will need to be retrained in other areas as trucking companies begin implementing autonomous vehicles and what training options will be available to them.

Academic library example

You would like to purchase a 3D printer in your library. You discover through your research that your dean was the director of a medical library and has an MBA. You host a meeting with your dean, medical librarian, medical school, dental school, nursing school, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and other health-related faculty and administrators to discuss jointly purchasing a 3D printer and/or writing a grant to purchase the printer, and housing it in your library with academic and other departments being able to use it for a fee. You must do your homework ahead of time. You will need to research grants, 3D printer costs, training, marketing, personnel costs, risks vs. returns, and combine this into a cost–benefit analysis so that you can provide this information before the meeting. You will need to discuss what the potential return on investment (ROI) will be.

School library example

You would like to purchase a drone for your school library. You need to get your principal and/or superintendent on board. Through your research you determine that your superintendent is an amateur pilot and your principal is a former math teacher. This is VERY good news. You have a great chance of getting these stakeholders on board if you talk to their interests and background. Your assignment is to research drones and find that a good quadcopter drone with a camera attached can cost less than \$200. You want to address how drones have been proven to engage, motivate, and inspire students. Students find them exciting and fun and that's what education should be. Discuss how administrators, managers,

technology, marketing, and public relations staff can use the drone to take spectacular photos that can be used in school marketing materials, the school website, and any school promotional materials.

You can also address how drones lend themselves to several school departments including social studies, physical education, science, math, technology, and others. The research supports that drones help students who have autism and other exceptionalities where they embrace the technology and have been shown to communicate the technology to others including students in mainstream classes. Drones also engage students where they pursue education and careers in the STEM and STEAM areas. You should utilize all of this research to justify introducing drones into your schools.

2. *Find the money*—How will you fund your initiatives? What is your budget? What resources will you need? Research grants and other opportunities and partnerships to pay for the emerging technologies. If you can find outside money to pay for the technology, you have an even greater chance of getting your stakeholders on board to implement emerging technologies in your library. Determine what all your costs will be. Perform a cost–benefit analysis and present this information to your stakeholders.
3. *What are the risks? How will you manage the risks?* Know what your potential risks are and address them. Some of your potential risks might be budget cost over runs; not meeting key milestones for implementing the technology in your library; staffing issues such as a key person going on maternity leave or resigning from their positions; any kind of legal issues that might arise, such as a staff member or patron injured by the technology such as a drone, robot, or 3D printer; or equipment failure and not having money set aside for replacement parts; not having enough staff members trained on the technology; or not having policies in place if a person wants to use the technology resources illegally? These are all risks that could impact the implementation of the technology in your library and must be addressed in your proposal to the stakeholders.
4. *What is the timeline for implementing these technologies?* When do you want or need to implement these technologies? Have you planned for issues that could delay implementing these technologies, such as funds not being made available? You need to have a detailed timeline on when you want to implement these technologies from your first kick off meeting with your team who will support this initiative, to

when you will meet with your stakeholder(s) to present your proposal for implementing your emerging technology, to getting their sign off on implementing the technology, to implementing, marketing, and training users on the technology. You will need to include meetings, key milestones, training, marketing, budgets, implementation, and anything else that can impact your timeline.

5. *What partnerships should you establish?* Depending on your type of library you should establish partnerships with schools, departments, other libraries, universities, colleges, community colleges, companies, vendors, workforce investment boards, community organizations, faith organizations, and other organizations and individuals who can collaborate with you on successfully implementing emerging technologies. For example, if you are a school library, you should partner with your public library, community college library, and faith/community organizations in your school district. You want to partner with those places where the students are likely to go when they leave your school.
6. *What training will you need?* Who will perform the training? What training model will you use? Will you use the train the trainer model? Will you have one person or a team who will provide the training and develop and update the training resources which will also entail adding the training materials to your website and keeping them updated. You will need to determine what your training costs will be and who will pay them.
7. *What marketing will you need?* How will you market your programs? Will you market your technology initiatives using social media and print media? You will need to meet with your marketing and publications experts to plan how you will market your emerging technology initiatives along with your costs and who will pay them.
8. *What staffing will you need to support these technology initiatives?* Will you need to hire additional personnel to support these initiatives or will you be able to utilize current staff? For example, your emerging technology librarian goes on maternity leave or resigns from their position before the technology is implemented. What will you do? It can take months to hire a new staff member. You don't have this kind of time. Will you move someone into this role or will you hire a temporary contractor? Keep in mind that even though they have the technology expertise, they will still need to learn your policies, procedures, and way of doing things. They will need "ramp up"

time where they will learn the “lay of the land.” You will need to determine your costs for all of these potential personnel adjustments and who will pay them.

9. *What are your potential legal issues?* You will need to meet with your legal department or legal experts about any potential legal issues that might occur for the technology that you want to implement. What if one of your drones injures a patron or staff member? What if a patron wants to use your 3D printer to print an illegal weapon or if they want to print someone else’s model and not give them credit? You will need to address all of these “potential landmines” and any other legal issues that might arise for any children’s programming /workshops that you are offering. For example, you are having a robot petting zoo in your library and you want to take pictures of the children and post them on your library website. Have you conferred with your legal department to ensure that you have the proper form for parents to sign allowing their child’s picture to be used on the library website and in other marketing materials? Make sure to discuss any potential legal issues that might arise with your legal experts/department and include this in your proposal for your stakeholders.
10. *Who is your audience and how can you engage them?* This is the most important part of your proposal. Without our patrons, there is no library. You will need to determine who your audience is and how you can engage them. Are they K–12 students, adults who will be displaced by these technologies, or technology novices who want to learn more about these technologies.

K–12 students

If your library is a public library and your audience is K–12 students, you must establish partnerships with all schools in your area. You want to meet with the school administrators and teachers to discuss your technology and other initiatives that can support their school. For example, inviting students, teachers, and administrators to attend programs at your local public library on programming robots, printing their own designs on the 3D printer, or creating their own music videos.

It is important to establish partnerships with academic and community college libraries also. Students can learn about different careers in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) and science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM) areas.

They can learn more about the careers and what classes and degrees are available to them. Students can be invited to attend various workshops on robotics, artificial intelligence, virtual reality/augmented reality, 3D printing, driverless vehicles, drones, and other emerging technologies to learn how they can prepare for careers in these dynamic technology areas.

Identifying the audience and determining their needs is tantamount to the success of the library and any technology initiatives that you might want to implement. This is important because, as librarians, our job is to help our patrons so that they can have a better, more rewarding, financially lucrative, and productive life.

Exposing low-income and minority students to technology in the library that they might not have at their homes is quite an equalizer. This opens up a whole new world for them where they might decide to become a software engineer or the next Lonnie Johnson, an engineer and inventor, who invented the Super Soaker water gun that has earned nearly \$1 billion in sales.

Displaced workers—truckers and autonomous vehicles

These emerging technologies will create job growth and massive job losses for those who do not have the technical skill set that these technologies will require. Libraries are places where people of all races, incomes, and education levels can go to obtain information and in some cases I have found, comfort from a warm, friendly, compassionate librarian who cares for them and wants them to succeed.

Librarians will need to establish partnerships with schools, community colleges, universities, community organizations, faith/religious organizations, workforce agencies, social services, and any job-retraining organizations.

One of the fastest areas that will be rendered obsolete and have tremendous job losses is the trucking industry. Driverless trucks and vehicles will replace human drivers in the very near future.

People who earned upwards of \$100,000 per year as truck drivers will find their jobs lost due to technology. Many of these people have homes, mortgages, and families and were accustomed to a certain standard of living. In the future, all of this will be gone. Most of these wage earners will not be able to pursue careers in these emerging technology fields as they lack the technical education and skill sets. They will need to be retrained for other occupations. This is

where librarians will be able to assist. Librarians can establish partnerships with other agencies to assist these people so that they can obtain the needed resources for their families so that they will be able to provide for their families in a manner similar to when they were employed by the trucking agencies and earning lucrative salaries.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY STAKEHOLDER BUY IN CHECK LIST

I have included a checklist below that you should follow when you are considering getting your stakeholders on board to implement new emerging technologies in your library. If you address all of these, you have a very good chance of getting your stakeholders on board to support your initiatives.

1. What technologies do you want to implement?
2. Why do you want to implement these technologies?
3. Who are your stakeholders and what are their backgrounds?
4. Why should your stakeholders support your technology initiatives?
5. What is your budget for your technology initiatives?
6. What training is needed to support these initiatives?
7. Who will provide the training and what are the costs?
8. How will you market these technology initiatives?
9. What are the marketing costs?
10. Did you perform a cost–benefit analysis for these technology initiatives?
11. Are there legal fees? If so, what are they?
12. What are the risks?
13. What are the returns on the investment (ROI)?
14. What strategic partnerships can you establish?
15. What is your timeline for implementing these technology initiatives?